Exploring the Relationship Between Work-Family Enrichment and Constructive Deviance: Applying Social Exchange Theory (SET)

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Abstract

This research study examined the relationship between work-family enrichment and constructive deviance. It is one of the few empirical studies which test whether individuals indulge in constructive deviance as an outcome of work-family enrichment. Additionally, researchers have investigated if the hypothesized relationship is mediated by felt obligation. Data were collected from 197 respondents employed at educational institutes in the United Arab Emirates. The analysis revealed a direct and positive relationship between work-family enrichment and constructive deviance. A partial mediation by felt obligation indicates that when employees experience that they are able to balance their work and family roles effectively, they reciprocate by indulging in behaviors which are beneficial for the organization. This mechanism is explained through the mediating role by felt obligation. Using a structural equation model study hypotheses were tested. Partial mediation by felt obligation was established based upon model fit indices and indirect path results. Findings of this study are unique as it attempts to unravel the underlying mechanism of how to work-family enrichment results in constructive deviance. This paper is a significant contribution to existing literature and extends further the conceptual knowledge of the constructs. This research offers valuable insight for organizations which is helpful in identifying and promoting positive behaviors among its employees.

Keywords: Work-Family Enrichment (WFE), Constructive Deviance (CD), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Felt Obligation (FE).

Introduction

Traditional roles and responsibilities of both men and women have changed post-1960s. Women are actively participating in the work domain and men have increased their involvement in family life. Most of the working individuals are single parents or have dependents to care for (children/parents). This societal shift has resulted in people living away from their family and created challenges to balance work and family life. Studies related to the work-family interface have dominated organizational psychology literature in recent times. A significant surge in these studies is mainly on account of changes in the socio-demographic factors and family structure. These changes have posed significant challenges for
organizations and employees, as balancing work and family domain becomes a tightrope act. Work-family interface studies have focused upon both conflict and enrichment aspects. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) stated work-family enrichment as “the extent to which experiences in one role improves the quality of life in the other role” (p. 72). Work-family enrichment bidirectionality was stated through previous empirical research findings (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005). It was proved that resources gained in both the domain improve the quality of life in the other domain.

Workplace deviance behaviors have been studied under various titles proving the researchers’ conscious attempt to apprehend its true significance (Vardi & Wiener, 1996; Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Workplace deviance as defined by Giacalone and Greenberg (1997) is actions that are in contrast to the organizational norm that may lead to a favorable or unfavorable outcome for an organization. Workplace deviance behaviors are categorized into; constructive/positive and destructive/ negative. Destructive deviance behaviors are antisocial behavior, organizational retaliation, employee deviance which has negative organizational outcomes. On the other hand, Appelbaum, Iaconi and Matousek (2007) defined positive workplace deviance as voluntary behavior that disregards the norms of the organization but with an honorable intent. For example, voice behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, corporate social responsibility, pro-social behavior, and innovative behavior (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Constructive deviance refers to non-compliance to unfit regulations and directions, and superiors resulting in favorable organizational outcomes.

Past findings have stated that an imbalance between work and family roles may result in physical and mental stress for an individual. Empirical studies concluded that the support received at work or in family helped minimize negative outcomes such as physical and mental stress. When this happens individuals gain resources from one domain which they utilize to effectively balance their roles in the other domain. This enrichment experience results in constructive deviant behaviors. This possible association of enrichment and constructive deviance interaction finds support in the norm of reciprocity (felt obligation) proposed by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). The present research proposes that mediation by felt obligation explains the mechanism of how work-family enrichment might result in individuals indulging in constructive deviance.

Work-family enrichment and constructive deviance lead to positive organizational outcomes (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). However, these constructs have been studied in isolation. Considering the fact that, not many empirical studies have examined the association of these two constructs, the present study becomes unique and significant.

**Literature Review**

**Work-Family Enrichment**

The literature of work-family enrichment finds mention of positive spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000), facilitation (Grzywacz & Marks, 2002), enhancement, (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002), and work-family fit (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) have valuable contribution towards conceptual and theoretical literature of work-family enrichment. They proposed a model of work-family enrichment which explains how the role in one domain improves quality of life in the other domain. With this model, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggested that work-family enrichment occurs when resources generated through participation in Role A (i.e., work or family) increases performance in role B (i.e., work or family). This eventually leads to an increase in quality of life in Role B. The model has theoretical underpinning in Expansionist Approach (Marks, 1977) and Role Accumulation Theory (Sieber, 1974). Expansionist Approach implies that involvement in one role generates resources that help to enhance performance in the other role. Resource generation depends upon the characteristics of the individual and the role (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Role Accumulation Theory argued that as opposed to the phenomenon of role strain, multiple role involvement benefits the individual
by generating resources that assist them to perform better in other roles. These two theories have assisted in comprehending the enrichment perspective. According to work-family enrichment model (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) there are five different types of resources, skills and perspectives (multitasking skills, respecting individual differences), psychological and physical resources (positive emotions, physical health), social-capital resources (information and influence), flexibility (timing, location), and material resources (money and gifts). The interdependence of these resources helps in the acquisition of more resources. Transfer of these resources from one role to the other takes place through the instrumental path and effect path. Instrumental path implies how resources acquired in one role directly influence performance in other role. While affect path states that resources gained in Role A enhances performance in Role A and this in turn produces enhanced performance in Role B. Thus the model proves bi-directionality of work-family enrichment.

Work-family enrichment antecedents include income and family support (Voydanoff, 2001) supportive climate & flexibility, and childcare responsibilities (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000) work satisfaction and family engagement (Rothbard, 2001), work autonomy (Voydanoff, 2004). The outcomes of the enrichment are categorized into work-related, non-work related and health-related (McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010a; McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010b) Work-related outcomes of WFE are job satisfaction, affective commitment, helping behavior, turnover intentions, etc. Non-work related outcomes are family satisfaction and family involvement whereas health-related outcomes are healthy mental and physical conditions. Family-work enrichment brings about positive outcomes which benefit the organization’s overall performance. Jain & Nair, (2017) stated that both work and family support are antecedents of work-to-family and family-to-work enrichment. Whereas work-family enrichment has both work and family related outcomes.

Constructive Deviance

Workplace deviance covers an array of positive and negative behaviors. Galperin (2003) defined constructive deviance as “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in doing so contributes to the well-being of an organization, its members, or both” (p. 158). Constructive deviance has a positive contribution towards organizational well being. Vadera, Pratt, & Mishra, (2013) further expanded the scope of constructive deviance by including behaviors such as extra-role behaviors, creative performance, expressing a voice, issue selling and taking charge, whistle-blowing, corporate social responsibility, pro-social rule breaking, and counter-role behaviors. Galperin (2012) stated that constructive deviance can be directed towards the organization or individuals, but certainly valuable for the organization. The determinants of constructive deviance are an individual's commitment to a social and moral purpose. Also, constructive deviance is 'pro-active and discretionary’ (Galperin & Burke, 2006). Thus it can be stated that constructive deviance refers to those behaviors which are otherwise not recommended but are favorable to the organization. Vadera, et al., (2013) proposed Emergent Model helps predict the possible reasons for individual indulging in constructive deviance behaviors. This model has three main characteristics, (a) deviate from reference group norms, (b) benefit the reference group and (c) conform to hyper-norms, which lead to constructive deviance behavior. Emergent Model described constructive deviance using mechanism involving intrinsic motivation, felt an obligation, and psychological empowerment. Individuals may engage in a particular behavior because they find it enjoyable, they want to take risks and explore new ways of doing their task (Vadera et al., 2013). Psychological empowerment mechanism has its antecedents in transformational leadership, self-determination, self-worth, and personality traits. The key mechanism explaining constructive deviance is felt obligation mechanism. Russo & Buonocore (2012) supported this mechanism and implied that supervisor support, co-worker support, organization support, positive attitude, and controlling supervision have all been related to constructive deviance through mediation by felt obligation. The predictors of constructive deviance are categorized as employee/job focused and organizational focused. Employee focused factors are emotional intelligence (Alias, Rasdi, Ismail, & Samah, 2013), psychological ownership (Chung & Moon, 2011), psychological empowerment (Taylor & Curtis, 2010) Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) (Tziner, Fein,
Sharoni, Bar-Hen, & Nord, 2010) personality traits (Bodankin & Tziner, 2009) and status and reference group engagement (Galperin, 2002). Empirical evidence shows constructive deviance is related to organizational commitment (Bodankin & Tziner, 2009), (Galperin & Burke, 2006) self-serving and less intervening behavior, organization climate (Narayanan, 2017) and whistle-blowing behavior (Appelbaum et al., 2007). Not many predictors have been identified on account of limited studies in this area. Additionally, there is a need for further investigation into organizational and individual factors which might be contributing to constructive deviance (Narayanan, 2017).

Theoretical Underpinning and Hypotheses

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) has proven to be instrumental in the understanding of enrichment perspective of work and family. Central to this theory is exchanged, economic and social. Economic exchange is more of a contractual obligation while the social exchange is an unspecified obligation. It’s the social exchange aspect which provides support to the mechanism proposed in this paper. Apart from social exchange theory, conservation of resources theory, spillover theory, broaden and build theory dominates the literature on work-family enrichment. On the other hand, constructive deviance construct finds support in social exchange theory, expectancy theory, and goal setting theory. Social exchange theory emphasized that the reciprocity norm. It implies that positive initiating actions by organization encourage the receiver to reciprocate with positive relational and behavioral actions. This norm of reciprocity subsequently creates a feeling of felt obligation wherein both employee and employer are benefitted. The recipient of the favor (person A) feels obligated to respond equitably towards the giver (person B).

The reciprocal actions are voluntary, based upon the expectation of returns and thirdly these expectations of return might involve a third party (Zhang, Zhou, Wang, & Cone, 2011)Work-family enrichment is mainly facilitated by the support received from supervisors, colleagues, and organization. When employees experience higher levels of enrichment they feel obligated and they act in a manner which promotes organizational effectiveness. When employees experience enrichment, they reciprocate with positive feelings, emotions, and behavior (McNall et al., 2010b; (Russo & Buonocore, 2012).

Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades (2001) argued that the organization's positive measures toward their employees generate resources that facilitate them to perform their family roles more effectively. In reciprocation, employees behave in a manner which leads to positive outcomes for the organization. The perception of organizational support and employee welfare developed a positive attitude by adopting behaviors that are favorable for the organization (Russo & Buonocore, 2012). Felt obligation feeling leads to behaviors which are more favoring rather than damaging the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986).

Considerable gaps were identified in existing literature, as not many empirical studies have explored the association of work-family enrichment and constructive deviance. Work-family enrichment has been found to be directly or indirectly linked to some of the positive deviance behaviors such as OCB (Bhargava & Baral, 2009), workplace creativity (Tang, Huang , & Wang, 2017), voice behavior (Zhang, et al. 2011) and innovative work behavior (Mishra, Bhatnagaer, Gupta, & Wadsworth, 2019). Apart from this handful, not many studies have examined the constructive deviance construct as a whole. Hence, while addressing the gap in the extant literature, present paper analyzes if work-family enrichment is a significant predictor of constructive deviance Furthermore, to explain the mechanism of this possible interaction, mediation by felt obligation is proposed.

It is evident that when organizations provide employees with resources that help in effectively performing their work roles, the resources are transferred to family roles thus creating enrichment. The transfer of resources takes place because of the felt obligation mechanism. Thus it is assumed that the relationship of work-family enrichment with constructive deviance is mediated by felt obligation. Hence, in the present study researcher proposes that resources gained at work/family help individuals perform effectively in the
same (instrumental path) and other domain (affect path). This enrichment experience creates felt obligation feeling to which the gainer reciprocates by indulging in constructive deviance behaviors. The following hypotheses are proposed,

Hypotheses 1: Work-family enrichment has a significant impact on constructive deviance.
Hypothesis 2: Felt obligation mediates the impact of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance.

Materials & Methods

Participants and Procedures

Data were collected from a sample of 197 employees consisting of 39% female and 61% male respondents from various educational institutes. Most of the respondents are full-time employed (78%) and 54% of the respondents are married. Approximately 41% of the respondents have childcare responsibility and nearly 15% of them have eldercare responsibility at home.

The sample size was determined using power analysis to ensure that data is fit for analysis using structural equation modeling technique (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Accordingly, the recommended sample size was 145 but in actual 197 completed surveys was considered for data analysis. Missing data analysis was conducted to determine the percentage of missing data for each variable. Listwise deletion method was used to identify that 0.8% of data is missing, which is within the acceptable limit.

Measures

Work-family enrichment was measured using the scale developed by Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz (2006). This bi-directional scale is a shortened version of the original scale. Three items each measure work to family enrichment and family to work enrichment. Responses were collected on a 5-point Likert scale with sample items “My involvement in my work helps me feel personally fulfilled and this helps me to be a better family member.” and “My involvement in my family puts me in a good mood and this helps me to be a better worker.”

Reliability of the work-family enrichment scale is very good at 0.867.

In order to measure the dependent variable of the study, constructive deviance, a scale developed by Galperin (2012), that comprises two factors i.e. constructive deviance directed towards the organization and constructive deviance directed towards the employees was used. This measure has 16 items with responses collected using a 5-point Likert scale. Some of the items on the scale were, “I have searched for innovative ways to perform day to day activities at work.” and “I have reported a wrong-doing to another person in your company to bring about a positive organizational change.”

Reliability of this scale was very good at 0.832. Eisenberger et. al (2001) developed a seven-item scale to measure felt obligation. The scale is helpful in evaluating employees’ contribution and care about their well-being. A sample item is “I have an obligation to the organization to ensure that I produce high-quality work.” The respondents specified their agreement or disagreement on a 5-Level Likert scale. The scale has a good reliability score of 0.75.

Factor loadings for the items were above the recommended 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value was above the threshold value of 0.5, thus convergent validity was established. Discriminant validity requirement was fulfilled as correlation values of the construct are lower than the square root of AVE. Table 1 provides sample characteristics.
Table 1 Sample Characteristics

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Results

First, the researcher examined model wherein, the direct relationship of work-family enrichment with constructive deviance was found to be significant (0.34, p<0.05) and work-family enrichment had a significant relationship with the felt obligation (0.51, p<0.05). The model fit indices for this model without mediation were ($\chi^2 = 22.110; df = 12; CMIN/df=1.843; p = .036; GFI=.97; CFI = .97; NFI = .93; TLI=0.94; RMSEA = .07$) Next, researcher tested a structural model with direct path of work-family enrichment and constructive deviance and indirect through felt obligation. This mediation model proved to be a good fit of data $\chi^2 = 20.500; df = 11; CMIN/df=1.864; p = .039; GFI=.97; CFI = .97; NFI = .94; TLI=0.94; RMSEA = .066$. The model fit indices showed slight improvement; hence the researcher accepted the structural model with mediation. In conclusion, felt obligation is found to be partially mediating the effect of work family enrichment on constructive deviance. Work-family enrichment has a positive effect on constructive deviance (0.21, p<0.05) Work-family enrichment has a significant positive influence on the felt obligation (0.33, p<0.00) and the impact of felt obligation on constructive deviance is positive as well (0.22, p<0.05). As the direct effect of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance is significant.

Additionally, the indirect effect of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance through felt obligation is significant as well. Hence, it is concluded that felt obligation partially mediates the impact of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance. Bootstrapping results indicate a small but significant indirect effect of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance ($\beta=0.068$ two tailed, p<0.05 95% CI (-.008,.491). Therefore both H1 and H2 are supported.
Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine if work-family enrichment can predict constructive deviance. Additionally, mediation by felt obligation was tested, to help explain the mechanism of the hypothesized association. While both the constructs were studied in the past in association with other variables, for the first time work-family enrichment and constructive deviance are examined together in this study. Along with this, partial mediation by felt obligation further provides insight into the association. SET lends support for the mediation by felt obligation (Carlson et al. 2006; Aryee et al. 2005). Results of the study help in conclusion that work to family enrichment promotes constructive deviant behavior among employees. Even though not many studies have examined the direct relationship of work-family enrichment and constructive deviancy, present results are consistent with Zhang, Liu, Loi, & Lau, 2010, who found a positive relationship between work-family enrichment and voice behavior. Additionally, in line with the findings of previous studies, resources gained in work domain are found to have positive effect on work-related outcomes (McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009). As discussed earlier work-family enrichment is experienced when an individual can acquire resources from the family domain and use it effectively to improve his/her role in work and vis a vis. Work-family enrichment is evidently facilitated by the support received from various sources such as supervisor, organization, peers etc (Bhargava & Baral, 2009). Thus social support received in the work domain is perceived by the employee as social rather an economic exchange. Hence, in reciprocation to this social support, they reciprocate through behaviors which are voluntary and in favor of the overall organization's interest. In the absence of any social support, the employee might experience poor family satisfaction. Such experience discourages an employee from going extra miles and indulging in behavior which promotes organizational effectiveness. Present study findings are not devoid of limitations, hence further research is recommended using a larger sample. A cross-cultural study will also prove to be insightful considering the fact that family roles, values and beliefs
differ from one culture to another. Future research should attempt to explore the bi-directionality of the construct. Work to family and family to work enrichment can be examined separately as they may have different outcomes. As per the definition constructive deviance includes different norm-breaking behaviors, so researchers can explore the specific behavior which is mostly influenced by work-family enrichment.

**Conclusion**

This paper has an important contribution to the literature of both the work-family interface and deviant behavior. The mediating effect of felt obligation was the second contribution which not just helps strengthen SET but is a step towards supporting the underlying mechanism. Results of the study highlight that both direct and indirect effects of work-family enrichment on constructive deviance are positive and significant. This suggests that organizations need to be doing more than what they are doing at present for their employees. The organizational efforts should not just be focusing on its employees but it should be inclusive of their families as well. Irrespective of the directionality of enrichment be it work to family or family to work, it is the work domain which has a larger role to play as the outcome of enrichment is in favor of the organization. The organization needs to develop family-friendly policies and support structure. Supervisors and managers have a significant contribution by extending support and effectively integrating emotional intelligence techniques while managing their subordinates. Effective mentoring and family-friendly policies may also result in enrichment experiences for the employee. The more an organization supports employee the more they get resources which will help them perform their family roles effectively. Individuals will attribute their positive experiences to the domain which is helping and supporting them (work domain). Therefore, organizations need to intervene in a manner which results in work-family enrichment and will extract reciprocal feeling to indulge in constructive deviance. Furthermore, an effective social support system may act as a propellant of voluntary behavior.

**Acknowledgement**

Given the opportunity, we would like to thank All Mighty Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful, who gave us the strength, courage to successfully complete the study. We would like to extend sincere gratitude to our family and friends for their unconditional support throughout the journey. Special thanks to the mentor and author Dr. Nasreen Khan for her time and indefatigable effort throughout the research. We are thankful to Ms. Mahak Shabir for lending a helping hand in conducting the surveys, without her support this study would not have been possible. Lastly, we are thankful to the participants of the study for being part of the study and everyone who has been part of the research directly or indirectly.

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